

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

11 October 1955

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 72-55

SUBJECT: Soviet Intentions in East-West Contacts.

1. The Soviet stress upon increased East-West contacts which began soon after Stalin's death with public acknowledgements of the achievements of western science and technology was given new impetus at Geneva. One of the Geneva conference directives emphasized the necessity for freer contacts and exchanges and the mutual advantages to be derived. Soviet leaders have since provided numerous concrete examples of their willingness to sponsor such exchanges with many countries, and particularly with the United States. The USSR apparently plans a series of exchanges to follow the recent visit of their agricultural delegation to the US.

2. This desire to increase contacts raises the question of what the USSR hopes to gain from them. The Soviet leaders probably estimate that the advantages of increased East-West contacts will outweigh the possible disadvantages, particularly the danger that Bloc citizens visiting the West will realize the inadequacies and falsehoods of the official Soviet view of the West, and lose confidence in the Soviet

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regime and its policies. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the advantages which we believe the Soviets expect to gain.

MATERIAL-TECHNICAL

3. Increased Soviet travel and freer contacts with the US will add substantially to the USSR's technical information, and thus eventually to its economic strength. The Soviet agricultural delegation to the US, by first-hand observation of US farming techniques, gained information which will aid it in improving Soviet agrotechnique and thereby Soviet economic growth. The delegation was also able to acquire livestock, additional farm publications, and several types of farm machinery. The Soviet delegation consisted of men well qualified both to benefit from their tour and to apply their newly acquired knowledge in the USSR. The composition of future delegations both in the field of agriculture and in other fields in which US technical know-how is more advanced than that of the USSR, such as the housing construction tour currently in progress, will also be chosen in order to gain the maximum technical and material advantage to the USSR.

POLITICAL

4. The USSR can also be expected to exploit in full measure the propaganda potential from East-West contacts. The USSR will point to these contacts and requests for exchanges as proof of the peacefulness and sincerity of Soviet intentions. Any hesitancy on the part of the US to cooperate fully, or any insistence upon fulfillment

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of onerous legal requirements by Soviet visitors, such as finger-printing, can be expected to be cited as examples of US obstructionism. The Soviet propaganda line on "internationalism" is already moving from the old, narrower "proletarian internationalism" to a new concept of "Soviet internationalism" which involves the "propagation of ideas of friendship between nations, regardless of their social systems".

5. The USSR probably also hopes to create confusion regarding ultimate Soviet objectives through contacts between ostensibly well-meaning, friendly, and gracious Soviets and US officials, professional, and business men. They may expect to re-establish in part the acceptance of Soviet Russia which obtained in many circles during the late '30s and war years by stressing such themes as the desire for peace, the need for more widespread trade, the potential of peaceful use of nuclear power, etc., and by emphasizing those elements of Communist ideology and the Soviet system which on the surface appear to be compatible with Western values. The Soviets probably estimate that they have a good chance of gaining such acceptance from a selected number of legislators, scholars, business, and professional men. For example, it was noted in a recent issue of "Problems of History" (the journal published by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR) that "there are many non-Marxist historians in capitalist

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countries who are doing fruitful work", and that "Soviet scholars are ready to cooperate with these historians in order to develop historical science and to contribute to the progress of science and culture by joint efforts". It was carefully noted, however, that certain "reactionary bourgeois historians" could not be included within the pale of this joint effort, which would include joint publication, broadened personal contacts, mail correspondence, and frequent exchange of professors for lecturing and research.

INTELLIGENCE

6. The Soviet leaders/^{probably}also anticipate acquiring additional intelligence through increased East-West contacts, although they probably do not expect to obtain by this means positive classified intelligence on US strategic capabilities and intentions. Their principal goals will probably be: (a) to acquire greater insight into US political attitudes and overall US industrial and technical capabilities; and (b) to cultivate associations in the US which could lead either to the direct acquisition of intelligence, or to creating a backlog of potential cut-outs, contacts, etc. for future exploitation by the Soviet covert organization.

CONCLUSIONS

7. While the Soviets probably intend ~~maximm~~ exploitation of the advantages inherent in increased personal contacts with the West, they will almost certainly take steps to prevent the West from obtaining reciprocal advantages. They will preserve the appearance of reciprocity

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but will nevertheless impose careful though not obviously controlled restrictions on Western travellers, permitting them, for the most part, to see what the Soviets want them to see, and to contact carefully selected Soviet citizens. The Soviet citizens permitted to go abroad will also be selected and controlled.

8. The Soviets will probably also urge more widespread exchanges of information in order to preserve the "spirit of Geneva" and the appearance of reciprocity, but probably with the primary purpose of acquiring more documents from the US. However, they will continue to exercise close control over exchange of documents, as well as censorship over such other information media as the press, radio, and private correspondence. As in the case of personal exchanges, the Soviets will probably expect to derive political and propaganda advantages from ostensibly freer interchanges of information, while at the same time denying to the US equal opportunities for either disseminating or acquiring information. 25X1A9a



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